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Subject: Footnotes Online - August 2017

Dear Supporter,

Yes, it's true. The Legislature is reconvening yet again this week (Friday) to work on redistricting maps to satisfy a court order. But we don't know what else the members might take up. The list of possibilities includes overrides of Governor Cooper's vetoes, regulatory reform bills, a drinking water quality crisis on the Cape Fear River and - as ever - things we don't know about. This has already been a big week for the environment in North Carolina, with deadlines for public comments for both offshore drilling and the proposed Atlantic Coast pipeline. As ever, we need to remain vigilant and engaged. To that end, thank you for all you do. Your Staff at the NC Sierra Club



Sierrans show up in force to protest offshore drilling plans

North Carolina Sierrans joined fellow concerned coastal residents last week to forcefully restate their objection to offshore oil and gas drilling at a series of hearings hosted by the state Department of Environmental Quality.

While federal authorities will ultimately decide whether to include North Carolina's coastline in a five-year offshore drilling plan, state officials held the hearings to help inform Governor Cooper's official comments on the Trump administration's proposal to include our state in the plan.

Last month, Cooper announced he would oppose drilling off our coast as well as requests for permits to perform seismic surveys for oil and gas deposits, saying "Not off our coast!" He cited the potential damage that could be caused to the coastal environment - and, by extension, the tourism and fishing industries - if a drilling rig leaked or exploded.

The message resonated with the public hearing attendees last week, who filled meeting rooms in

Wilmington, Morehead City and Manteo.

"I think a very strong no from Governor Cooper, we're hoping carries a lot of weight," Andy McGlinn, chair of the Sierra Club's Cape Fear Group, said at the Wilmington hearing.

About 30 local governments in North Carolina have officially objected to drilling off the state's coast, too.

"We've had a long-standing objection," Dare County Commissioner Wally Overman told the Virginian-Pilot at the Manteo hearing, noting that the county passed resolutions against offshore drilling in 1998, 2003, 2005 and 2015. "No evidence has been uncovered to demonstrate any benefits to us."

Tomorrow, Thursday, is the deadline for the public to comment on the plan to the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. [**BOEM's website has instructions on how to comment online or via mail**](#), or you can [**use the Sierra Club's form to submit your response**](#). More than 80,000 people have commented - be heard, too!



Stand up for the State's Attorney!

As you will have seen in the news, the Legislature earlier this year slashed funding for the state's Attorney General's office. The Attorney General has already had to let go an astonishing 45 positions - and more will be lost if the General Assembly does not restore funding.

The Attorney General is the state's top attorney, charged with defending our air and water quality laws in court. Last year, the Sierra Club was pleased to endorse the successful candidacy of former state Sen. Josh Stein.

[**Please take a moment to contact your state representative and ask them to restore funding for the Attorney General's office when they reconvene in Raleigh this Friday.**](#)



Paddling with purpose: Sierrans find their flow at pipeline protest

This month, dozens of Sierrans, supporters and allies tried something new: a waterborne demonstration against the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

About 60 kayakers paddled down the Tar River on Aug. 5 to draw attention to their concerns about the gas pipeline's potential impact on clean water in North Carolina. Dominion Energy's proposal calls for the pipeline to stretch about 600 miles from West Virginia across Virginia and into North Carolina.

In North Carolina, the pipeline would cross about 560 waterways in eight counties before terminating in Robeson County.

The Sierra Club, 350 Triangle and Sound Rivers organized the paddle to coincide with a public comment period that will allow North Carolinians to highlight their concerns to the state Department of Environmental Quality about the proposed pipeline.

The agency must agree that the project won't pose an unreasonable threat to the state's coastal management program and, specifically, to water quality before it is allowed to proceed. [**You can use our form to submit your comments before the Aug. 19 deadline.**](#)

Caroline Hansley, the Sierra Club's Dirty Fuel organizer who helped arrange the event, said the most moving part of the trip was when the group floated over the proposed crossing point for the pipeline.

"Clearly visible were the survey markers where Duke Energy and Dominion Energy want to open up the earth and permanently place this dirty and dangerous pipeline," she said. "Physically being at a point of potential destruction meant it was very important to see, to smell, to feel, and to enjoy how beautiful this place was before any construction could begin."

Special thanks to Hansley, NC Sierra Club outings co-chair Robert Scull, Bob Hudkins of the Medoc Group, Tom Williams of the Cypress Group, and Jim McManus of the Headwaters Group for their hard work in organizing this event!



Weigh in on Nantahala and Pisgah Forests plan - and join our trip to learn more!

If a tree is cut down in the forest and no one is there to stop it, it may not make a sound. But it may have serious reverberations - for wildlife, for habitat and for those of us who love pristine natural areas.

[That's why we encourage you to speak up now on the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest Plan being drafted by the U.S. Forest Service.](#)

Periodically, the US Forest Service updates its management plans for our national forests. The Sierra Club and its allies are concerned that the preliminary draft of the plan for the Nantahala and Pisgah Forest in western North Carolina treats the vast majority of the forests as being the same, without recognizing many special places within the landscape that are important to backcountry recreation, exceptional biodiversity, old growth trees, and connectivity of habitat. The way the plan reads now, it leaves too much discretion to future timber project planners and could technically allow for timber-cutting in sensitive areas.

The USFS is taking public comments on the plan now until Sept. 30. It's time to be heard! [Visit our website for recommendations on concerns you can express](#) about the unique needs of specific ranger districts that are most important to you personally, as well as the overall plan. You'll also find information on how to submit your comments by email or postal mail.

And if you want an up-close look at some of these beautiful natural areas, be sure to attend our upcoming group Camporee near Mount Mitchell and the Black Mountains on Sept. 22-24, "The Pisgah Wilderness Weekend."

[Register now to join NC Chapter outings leaders as we explore the area around rugged and wild lands in the Grandfather and Appalachian districts of the Pisgah National Forest.](#)

The event starts with a meet-and-greet on Friday night to learn more about Saturday's hikes. After a day of fun exploration on Saturday, guests will enjoy a group meal and a presentation about the forestry plan.

Spaces are limited, so sign up now!

BURNING AMERICAN FORESTS TO ELECTRIFY EUROPE

A public event focusing on the effects of the wood pellet industry on NC

Forum to address wood pellet industry's threats to NC forests

One of the most significant threats facing North Carolina's coastal forests is the rise of the wood pellet industry. But the dangers it poses aren't well known or understood by many.

That's why the Sierra Club's Cape Fear Group is co-hosting the Wood Pellet Forum, an educational event that will help inform the public about the effects of the wood pellet industry on North Carolina's communities and forests.

The day-long forum, to be held Friday, Sept. 29, at UNC-Wilmington, will include an impressive set of experts whose discussions will help improve awareness, understanding and appreciation of consequences of harvesting, processing, transporting and burning wood pellets derived from bottomland swamp and other hardwood forest trees.

For the full schedule, information on speakers, registration and more, visit the forum's website. You can also **follow the event on Facebook.**



Ladies and gentlemen: Start your electric engines!

Talk about a smooth ride: Clean-running electric vehicles are growing in popularity as automakers improve their power, range - and price. Sierrans who are curious about the current generation of gas-free cars can get a firsthand look at some during National Drive Electric Week.

The week, co-sponsored by the Sierra Club, is meant to heighten awareness of the widespread availability of plug-in vehicles. It will highlight the benefits of all-electric vehicles, as well as plug-in hybrid-electric cars, trucks and motorcycles.

In Raleigh, the NC Clean Energy Technology Center at NC State University will host an alternative fuel vehicle demonstration and tailgate at NCSU's football home opener on Saturday, Sept. 9. Electric vehicle owners will have a meet-up and ride-and-drive by invitation only on Friday, but the

public is welcome to watch.

For more information, to buy tickets or to volunteer at the events, check the Drive Electric Week website.

Upcoming Outings and Events

Note: All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. To register, contact the group leader(s) or [visit the Outings and Events calendar on our website.](#)

Tuesday-Thursday, Aug. 15-18: Listening sessions on the Atlantic Coast Pipeline

Rocky Mount, Jackson and Lumberton

You will be able to speak directly with North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality to express your concerns about the Atlantic Coast Pipeline's threat to the state's land, water, and communities. Speaker registration and sign-in for all three listening sessions will start at 5:30 p.m. The listening sessions begin at 6 p.m.

- Tuesday: Nash Community College, 522 N. Old Carriage Rd., Rocky Mount
- Wednesday: Northampton County Cultural and Wellness Center, 9536 N.C. Hwy. 305, Jackson
- Thursday: Southeastern Agricultural Center, 1027 U.S. Hwy. 74, Lumberton

Contact/leader: Caroline Hansley caroline.hansley@sierraclub.org

Wednesday, Aug. 16, 7 PM: Sierra Club endorsements for local candidates - Orange-Chatham Group

Imbibe, 108 Henderson St., Chapel Hill

The Sierra Club believes it's vital to educate our members about the political candidates who will make decisions impacting the environment and residents' quality of life. In the Chapel Hill region, the Orange-Chatham Group evaluates town and county candidates. Come hear about how and why we endorse.

Contact/Leader: Melissa McCullough melissamccnc@gmail.com

Wednesday, Aug. 23, 9 AM (tentative): Green Knob Hike - Wenoca Group

This hike is designed as a car shuttle to facilitate an approximate four-mile descending hike

from the Blue Ridge Parkway, down the the Black Mountain Campground. Includes great views of the Blacks. Learn about the potential wilderness areas and the current Pisgah National Forest planning process which could result in the wilderness recommendation.

Contact/leader: David Reid (828) 713-1607 743beetree@charter.net

Saturday, Aug. 26, 10 AM: Warren Wilson College Hike: Bull Creek Trail & River Trail - Wenoca Group

Easy, approximately four miles one-way on this shuttle hike (a thru-hike with cars parked at each end). These shady trails follow Bull Creek and the Swannanoa River. We will also go by the old dam site. Despite its "easy" rating, there are places with tree roots and rocks, plus a few up/down-hill stretches. There will be a "splashing" opportunity to cool yourself off (sorry, no swimming) We may also try some tree and wildflower identification, and perhaps some bird song identification.

Contact/leader: Lisa Mcwherter (828) 298-0801 lisamcw2@gmail.com

Friday-Sunday, Sept. 22-24: Pisgah Wilderness Weekend

Brian Bottom Group Campground, Burnsville

North Carolina Chapter outings leaders will host a camping/hiking weekend to explore potential wilderness and other areas on the Grandfather and Appalachian districts of the Pisgah National Forest. Like last year's Great Grandfather Wilderness Weekend Camporee, this group outing will provide multiple opportunities to become familiar with some outstanding wild areas within the western part of the Grandfather District, and the eastern part of the Appalachian District. We will camp in two group campsites of the Briar Bottom Group Campground. [**Registration and payment are required.**](#)

For further details and to register for events, [**please visit our Outings calendar.**](#)

[**Please consider making a donation today to help us protect North Carolina's air, water, and natural places.**](#)



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